

School pupils studying hard online

Scotland's schools and teachers are working hard to ensure that pupils who have had enforced days off due to the snow can catch up on missed work.

The moves have been welcomed by Education Secretary Michael Russell who also highlighted a record number of hits on the GLOW schools website the week that most schools were closed. Hard to believe that the pupils were not online simply to update their Facebook profiles, but apparently not.

Planned action to support catch up includes:

- * rescheduled prelims, with Scottish Qualifications Authority in touch with all centres to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged
- * extra work and project assignments set for private study, both over the holidays and during term time
- * planned exam leave in areas such as East Lothian cancelled to allow coverage of missed syllabus items
- * some teacher 'in service days' in East and West Lothian and others postponed until the summer term
- * Aberdeenshire and Moray among the authorities convening head teacher meetings in early 2011 to plan a 'catch up' campaign.
- * additional supported study sessions – both classes and tutorials – arranged by re-timetabling within normal hours and also during lunchtimes and after hours in the likes of Clackmannanshire and Falkirk
- * some non-curricular activities curtailed to make more time available for catch up and supported study for particular groups of pupils over the Easter holidays, for example South Lanarkshire and West Lothian

Mr Russell said:

“I am delighted to see Scotland’s schools and committed teachers doing some smart thinking and planning to ensure their pupils aren’t left disadvantaged by snow days this winter.

“Some will have been more affected than others. In most cases prelims have gone ahead as planned or as rescheduled but where they haven’t, the assistance of SQA will be enormously helpful in ensuring no-one is disadvantaged.

“Earlier in the month I highlighted the excellent work being carried out in Aberdeenshire and West Lothian to maximise the potential of schools website GLOW in distance learning.

“I am therefore particularly pleased to see that use of GLOW hit record levels for a single week, with a quarter of a million hits from more than 54,000 unique users in the week starting December 13, which shows that distance learning was being carried out across the board.

“Other websites such as SCHOLAR, Edubuzz, BBC Bitesize and Mathletics, as well as schools’ own websites, are also being used very widely, although of course not every piece of work needs to be technology-based.

“While I can detect an audible groan from many pupils on being presented with holiday assignments and extra work, the long term benefits of completing the school year as it was intended, cannot be overemphasised and I would encourage all schools and authorities to emulate these good examples. I know many are doing just that.”